

SB 1078 (EVANS)

STATE PARKS REVENUE GENERATION ACT

THE GOAL

To make our state parks become more financially self-sustaining through innovative revenue generation projects and programs. This bill creates the entities to facilitate new programs that serve the mission of state parks while raising new revenues.

BACKGROUND

On May 1, 2011 the Department of Recreation and Parks announced the pending closure of 70 state parks on July 1, 2012, due to budget cuts. Local communities are rallying to keep parks open by fundraising and creating operating agreements with non-profits. The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is also issuing requests for proposals for private concessionaires to operate parks. It is unclear whether these efforts will be sufficient to remove all the parks from the closure list and prevent future closures. As the General Fund portion of DPR's budget continues to shrink, DPR needs new revenue sources to keep all parks open and accessible to the public.

THIS BILL

The State Parks Revenue Generation Act, SB 1078 would establish a new unit in the Department of Parks and Recreation, the **Innovation Team (IT)**, which would examine and initiate new revenue generation ideas and would assist local, **Innovation Working Groups (IWG)** in developing business plans for individual parks and districts.

The Innovation Team (IT) would work system wide and with voluntary local Innovation Working Groups (IWG) to bring in new visitors and revenues to state parks

Among the ideas for revenue generation that will be evaluated by the IT are: lower cost regional annual passes; marketing passes in retail outlets and providing value coupons with passes; tax check off options to purchase passes; credit and ATM card use at automatic entrance kiosks; using FasTrak passes; the greater use of historical buildings (without overt commercialization and without destroying the building's historical character) for events such as theatre concerts and meetings.

The IWGs would be composed of park employees or in cases where there are operating agreements with non-profits, representatives of those groups. IWGs will develop 5 –year business plans for the districts or park units they represent and will have the authority to implement them, which include the ability to sign contracts for goods and services and hiring part-time staff.

An IWG must have a community advisory board with which it must meet at least quarterly, and it must hold at least one public meeting each year.

As an incentive to promote local projects, the IWGs would be allowed to keep 70 percent of the revenues they earn through projects they implement in the park or the district they represent. The remaining 30 percent would be deposited in the Parks and Recreation Fund to be used system-wide.

No amendments to State Park General Plans would be necessary if the Director determines a project implemented by the IT and/or the IWG is consistent with the current General Plan.

The IT and IWGs work closely together. ITs review IWG business plans and projects and recommend to the Director the formation or dissolution of IWGs.

The bill also directs DPR to provide technical assistance to non-profits with operating agreements to form or join insurance risk pools to reduce the cost of insurance.

RELATED LEGISLATION

AB 95, which authorize state park closures; AB 42, which allows for non-profit park operating agreements (both chaptered); SB 974 (introduced) – requires DPR to annually review state park closures and plan for reopening parks.

SUPPORT

Sierra Club of California
Audubon California
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

OPPOSITION

N/A

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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